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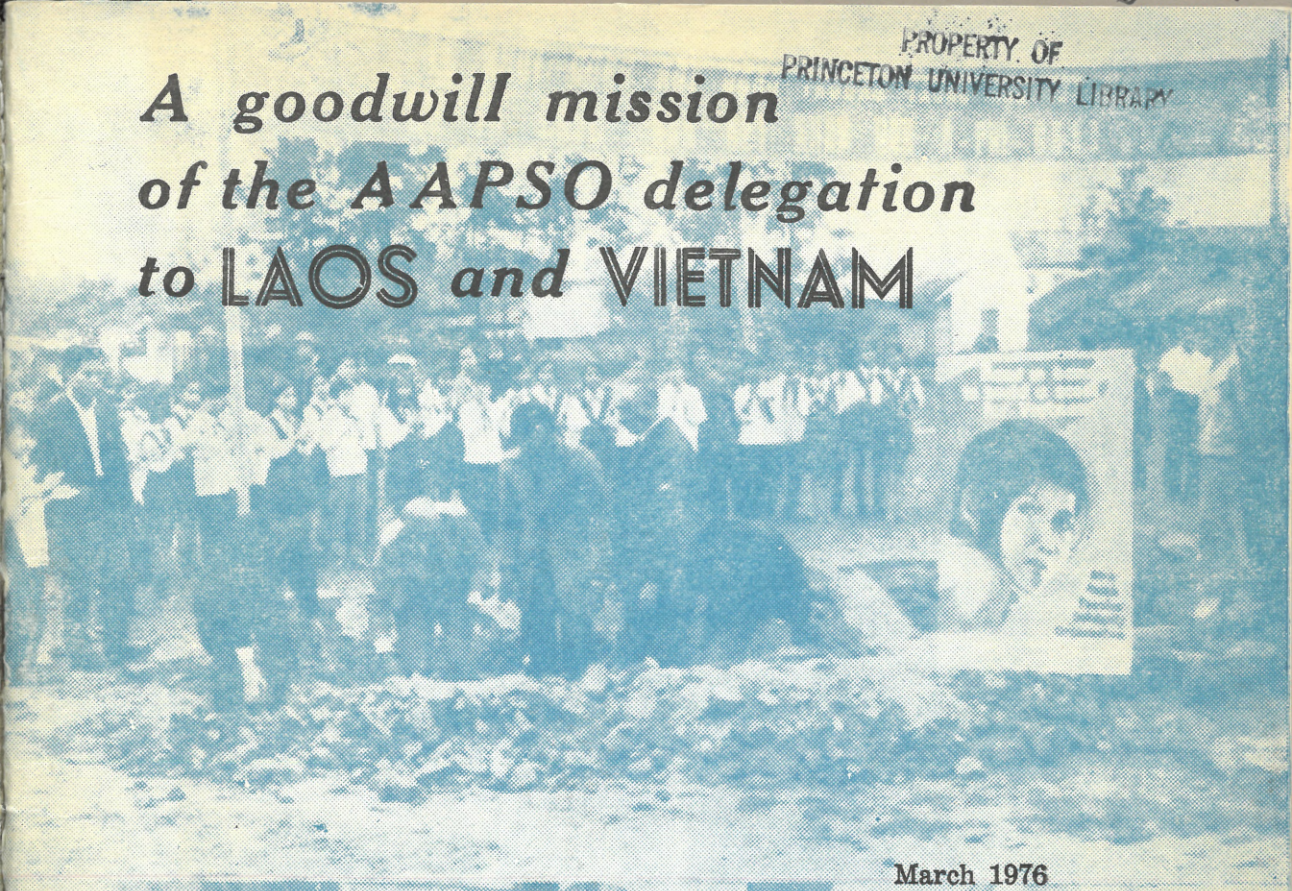
A goodwill mission of the AAPSO delegation to LAOS *and* VIETNAM



March 1976

A goodwill mission of the AAPSO delegation to LAOS *and* VIETNAM

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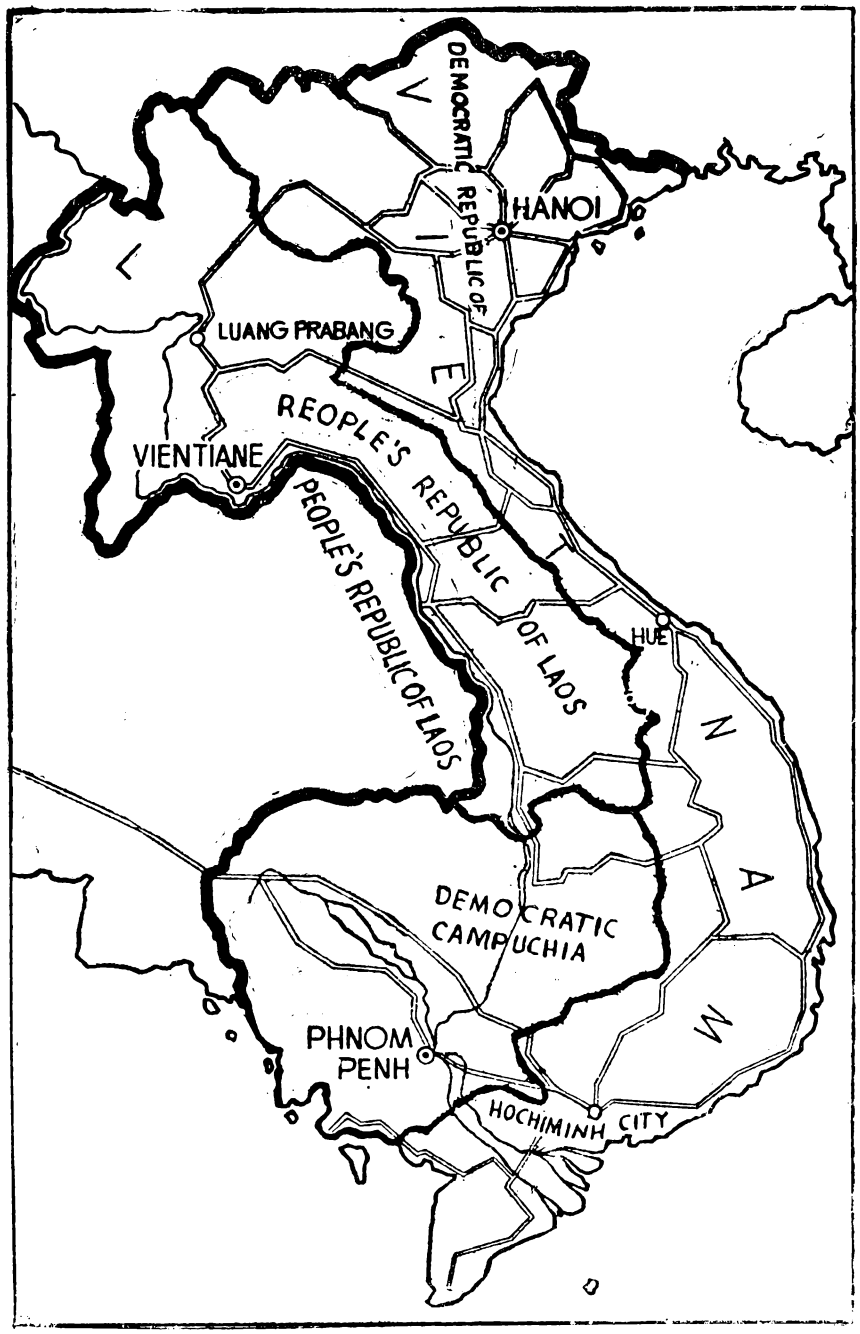


Laos and Vietnam

PREFACE

While the progressive mankind all over the world was celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of victory over Hitlerite Fascism, the same year 1975 witnessed the most glorious victories socred by national liberation movements in Asia and Africa. In South East Asia the heroic people of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia turned out the last U.S. soldier thus ending the longest and the cruelest aggressive war inflicted by U.S. neo-colonialism on the peoples of Indo-China. Likewise in the continent of Africa, the valiant freedom fighters, of the peoples of former Portuguese colonies gave final deathblow to Portuguese imperialism thus heralding a new era of freedom for Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, Mozambique and Angola.

The total liberation of Vietnam and the absolute fiasco of imperialist intrigues in Angola recently, had a tremendous impact on the entire balance of forces switching in favour of liberation, peace and development of nations. Consequently the remaining pockets of racist-colonialist regimes in Southern Africa are trembling and shaking. There are desperate attempts by racist-zionist and imperialist circles to protect their orbits and spheres of exploitation as much as possible and as long as possible. Old methods to subjugate and enslave peoples utterly failed, so the neo-colonialists are now planting new traps for the emerging forces. They are rushing to meet those whom they so long hated and denigrated. They had to bury the SEATO but found Diego Garcia, in the Indian Ocean, for the same nefarious purposes.

On the other hand, an event of great significance took place in Helsinki also in 1975 in the signing of the Final Act on European Security and Cooperation. It proved the failure

of the policy of cold war and heralded a new era of detente and international cooperation. Thus the two historic processes of detente and decolonisation got a big push in the mid-seventies, thanks to the unity of all anti-imperialist forces and the growing solidarity between developing nations and the socialist countries, as well as the progressive forces in the capitalist western countries.

It is in this context that the peoples of South East Asia are demanding to shape their own destiny without outside interference. It is in this background that the peoples of Indochina are advancing with the reins of administration now in their own hands. By December 1975 the people of Laos opted for a People's Democratic Republic and discarded the outmoded regime of monarchy. Early this year in 1976 the people of Cambodia adopted a new constitution replacing monarchy to a democratic form of government. In Vietnam the people, who were so long divided into north and south parts by imperialism, have been unified. On April 25, 1976 the Vietnamese people held their general elections for the first time after a lapse of thirty years. The whole nation is jubilant and confident over the bright prospects of a new unified Vietnam.

For nearly two decades the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation — from its very inception — has been whole heartedly and consistently supporting the just struggle of the peoples of Indochina. In fact, the campaign for international solidarity with the Vietnamese people has been at the centre of AAPSO activities. The world has never witnessed anything like the Vietnam Solidarity movement in its breadth and depth cutting across all boundaries — race, colour or creed, religion, faith or ideology. It swept through all continents, all religions and all ideologies. And in this connection those peace-loving Americans must not be forgotten who demonstrated in thousands upon thousands in the very citadel of imperialism in favour of peace in Vietnam.

It is not possible to enumerate all the manifold activities undertaken by AAPSO in support of the national libera-

tion struggles in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Suffice to mention here a few important events organised by AAPSO

1. **Extraordinary Conference in support of the people of Vietnam (Cairo 7-9 September 1963).**

2. **International Conference in support of the struggle of the people of Laos against American Imperialist agression (Cairo 19-21 May 1970).**

In addition AAPSO actively joined in building the world-wide solidarity movement through the Stockholm Conference on Vietnam. It took part in numerous internatioal conferences and campaigns sponsored by this movement.

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the foundation of Democratic Republic of Vietnam, AAPSO published a Historical Sketch of Vietnam (a volume of nearly 500 pages).

It was quite natural, therefore, for all the progressive forces, solidarity movements, all the socialist countries and the non-aligned countries to hail the grand victory of the peoples of Indochina in their final triumph. The glorious victories of the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were also victories of all those anti-imperialist forces who throughout supported them morally and materially.

As the people of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia bore the main brunt of imperialist aggression, the progressive forces admired their death-defying courage and unprecedented sacrifices not only for their own national independence but for the common cause of making imperialism further retreat from South East Asia. Even more, its impact was world-shaking for the benefit of all liberation forces. Its vibrations were felt in Africa, Middle East, US, Europe and Latin America. Apparently small nations without nuclear capability have humbled the mightiest of imperialist military power in all fields: military, moral and diplomatic.

Now that the peoples of Indochina are engaged in healing the wounds of war and reconstruction of their economy, it is the duty of all progressive mankind to contribute as much as possible in the rehabilitation programmes. AAPSO decided in its last XII Council session (held in September 1975 in Moscow) to continue its solidarity campaign in the second battle of development and construction.

It is in this context that we present herewith a brief report of an AAPSO goodwill mission which visited Laos and Vietnam at the end of March 1976.

REPORT ON GOODWILL MISSION OF THE AAPSO DELEGATION TO LAOS AND VIETNAM

23-31 March 1976

A three-member goodwill delegation visited Laos and Vietnam between 23rd and 31st March 1976. It was composed of

i) Om Prakash Paliwal, AAPSO Deputy Secretary-General (India) Leader

ii) Kamal Bahaa El Din, Deputy Secretary-General Egyptian Afro-Asian Solidarity

iii) Miguel Neto, AAPSO — Secretary (Angola).

IN THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF LAOS

The delegation spent three full days in Laos, i.e. 24, 25 and 26 Mars 1976. During this short stay the Lao Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity organised a highly useful, fruitful and interesting programme.

i) Meetings with the highest State and Government leaders.

ii) Meetings with the office-bearers of the Lao Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity.

iii) Public Meeting attended by mass organisations such as trade unions, women, youth and student organisations.

iv) Visits to a Higher Secondary School and a Hospital.

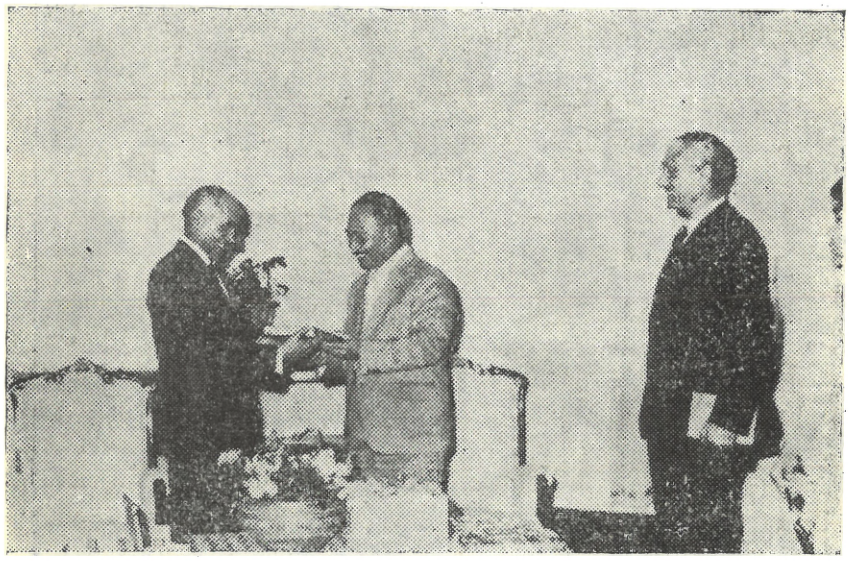
v) Official reception and dinner by the Deputy Prime-Minister as Chairman of the Lao Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee.

AAPSO delegation with President Souphanovong of Laos

AAPSO delegation recieved by the members of Lao Committee for Solidarity with Afro-Asian peoples.

MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC :

Within three months of the birth of People's Democratic Republic of Laos, AAPSO had the high honour of being the first international organisation to be received by President Souphanouvong who is also President of the Lao Patriotic Front. The President highly appreciated the role of AAPSO throughout the liberation struggle in Laos against U.S. imperialism. While underlining the need for unity among anti-imperialist forces he specially congratulated the Angolan



President Souphanouvang of Laos presenting souvenir to AAPSO deputy Sec. Gen. Mr. Paliwal

member of the delegation for attaining independence and routing reactionary forces. He praised the role of India in supporting the patriotic forces in Laos and its valuable contribution as Chairman of the International Control Commission on Laos. He praised Egyptian support to the liberation struggle and for holding the International Conference in solidarity with Laos as far back as May 1970 in Cairo. The delegation referred to AAPSO delegation's visit to liberated zone early in 1970 weherein Mr. Kamal Bahaa El Din was the leader. The

delegation after informing and assuring of AAPSO's continued support to the heroic people of Laos, made a specific proposal of publishing a short history of Laos national liberation struggle till the birth of the new Republic in December 1975. The President thanked and agreed with the suggestion as a valuable contribution from AAPSO for the benefit of the young generation as well as for all those fighting against neo-colonialist offensive in the Third World. Finally, the delegation presented a silver jar as a token of respect and affection from AAPSO. The President also presented to all three members Lao souvenirs. The meeting was marked with warmth and cordiality on both sides.

Meeting with the Chairman of the Lao Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee :

(In the office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Sports and Religious Affairs).

It is significant that just on the eve of AAPSO delegation's visit, the Lao Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity was reconstituted with no less a person than the Deputy Prime Minister of the country as chairman. It is also worth recalling that during the International Conference in Solidarity with Laos held in Cairo in May 1970, Mr. Phoumi Vongvichit had led the Lao delegation who is now the Deputy Premier of the People's Republic of Laos. When he received the AAPSO delegation in his office he remembered with gratitude the hospitality given by Mr. Youssef el Sebai as Secretary-General of AAPSO in Cairo.

Mr. Paliwal, as leader of the delegation, introduced the members of the delegation and explained the purpose of the goodwill mission. Primarily it was to congratulate the people of Laos for achieving total liberation and establishment of the People's Democratic Republic. At the same time AAPSO wished to convey its continued solidarity and support in the current phase of reconstruction and development of the country. Hence, the need to acquaint with the present problems and perspectives.

Appreciating AAPSO's continued interest and support to the people of Laos, Mr. Phumi Vongvichit gave a detailed appraisal of the present situation in Laos. He told the delegation that the people and government of Laos have to build up a new nation on the basis of a self-reliant national economy. By necessity it has to be done in stages and careful planning which they have started in all sectors. In order to achieve these aims Laos values highly the role of friendly nations and friendly international solidarity such as represented by AAPSO.

Second meeting at the office of the Solidarity Committee:

The delegation was invited to meet the office-bearers and other leading members of the Lao Solidarity Committee at its new premises. It was a delight to see the new building which houses committee rooms and halls for several functions including a big hall for public meetings. Here under the chairmanship of Mr. Phumi Vongvichit, we had occasion to exchange views on subjects of common interest with the national committee. After introduction of members on both sides, the chairman enlightened the delegation with an inspiring description how under the leadership of Laos Revolutionary People's Party (LRPP) U.S. imperialism and its lackeys were routed out of Laos. The history of Laos peoples' struggle for liberation has many lessons, as it is part of the worldwide struggle against imperialism, colonialism, racism, and neo-colonialism. The AAPSO delegation was highly impressed by this inspiring chapter of recent history.

After informing the committee of the present programme and activities of AAPSO, the delegation leader then proposed to the committee to prepare a written account of the history of Lao people's struggle for liberation till the birth of the Republic. How the people of Laos frustrated imperialist conspiracies and broke its links with local reaction at various stages, has lessons of tremendous value for Afro-Asian countries. There is so much in common in the struggles for national liberation, politically and economically, that AAPSO would like to publish the history of Lao people's suc-

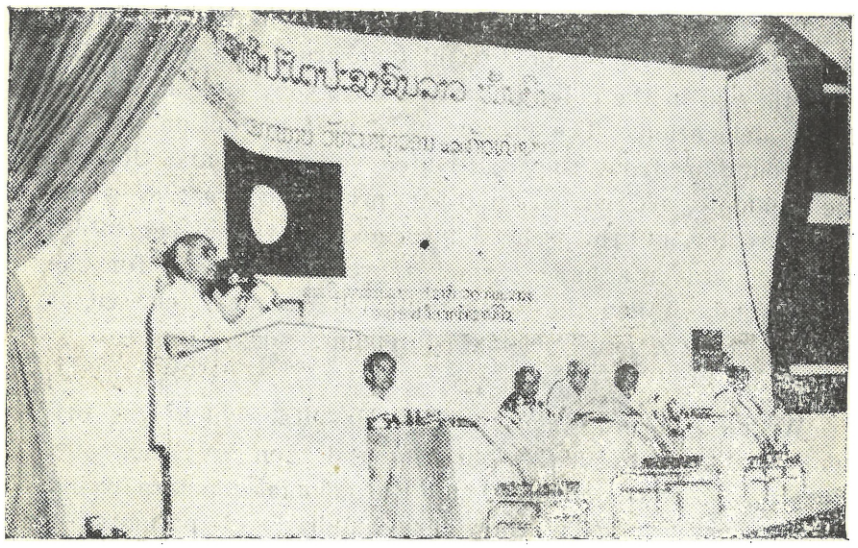
cessful struggle in establishing a People's Democratic regime. The idea was very much welcomed by the Lao Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee and the Chairman thanked AAPSO for its concrete suggestions and support to the People's Democratic Republic of Laos in the second battle for independence.

During further exchange of views between the two sides they informed of the present difficulties in Laos which were aggravated by imperialist attempts to incite local reaction and sabotage reconstruction. The neo-colonialists use the Thai reactionary force taking advantage of the proximity of Thai border where US imperialists have their military, political and economic influence. Both sides agreed on the need of unity of all anti-imperialist forces and constant vigilance against reactionaries. AAPSO delegation suggested the convening of an International Seminar on Non-Alignment Solidarity and Socialism with a view to mobilize public opinion.

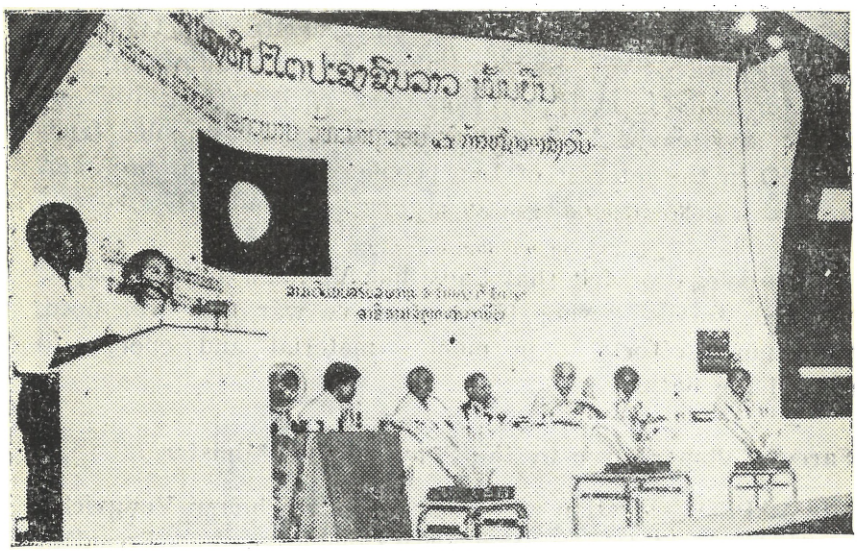
Public Meeting for the AAPSO delegation :

On the concluding day of AASPO delegation's stay in Vientiane, a large public meeting was held in a hall full of banners and slogans of solidarity, peace, development and socialism. "Welcome to AAPSO delegation and Long Live Afro-Asian Solidarity" were the main banners which greeted us. Among those present were some ministers, leaders and representatives of Trade Unions, women, youth and student organisations as well as leading citizens and members of Vientiane Municipality. The Deputy Minister for Education Mr. Outama Chounlamany (who is Secretary-General of the Lao Solidarity Committee) made the welcome speech followed by AAPSO Deputy Secretary-General Om Prakash Paliwal who delivered the main speech on the mission of the delegation, programme and activities of AAPSO and solidarity with Laos. Then Miguel Neto spoke on the victories of MPLA in Angola and the confidence in the victorious march of anti-imperialist forces. Both the speakers were loudly cheered and greeted by the audience.

Sec. Gen. of Lao committee addressing public meeting in honour of AAPSO delegation



Mr. Paliwal (India) addressing meeting in Laos



Mr. Neto (Angola) addressing meeting in Laos

Visits to Secondary School and Hospital :

The delegation was warmly greeted at a Higher Secondary School by the students and teachers. One noticed the patriotic zeal in the cultural performance they gave in honour of the delegation. The classes were neat and clean and on the ground in front they cultivated vegetables and flowers, The students are encouraged for profitable creative work. The Director of the school informed that the vegetables grown by students have earned appreciable amount for the school fund. When the delegation visited science classes, it felt the need of more science equipment.

We also visited Vientiane city Hospital which was originally built by French colonialists and then by Americans. But prior to independence, only the colonial masters would use the services. Now there are hundreds of patients — common Lao people — who are given medical care every day. Among the doctors there are a few French who opted to serve the new regime. There are now a number of Cuban doctors as well. In a meeting with the Director and staff of the Hospital, they informed of the functioning of the Hospital, its growing needs and requirements. On behalf of the delegation, Mr. Kamal Bahaa El Din addressed the Director and his staff assuring them of its appreciation of health services of Laos and doing everything possible from AAPSO in the interest of Lao people. The Director proposed to send a list of medicaments required by the Hospital.

The delegation felt that Laos, like Vietnam and Cambodia, suffered heavily during US aggressive war and will need tremendous efforts — in money, material and energy to rebuild the nation.

Farewell dinner given by the Deputy Prime Minister :

AAPSO delegation was invited by Mr. Phoumi Vongvichit as Chairman of the Lao Solidarity Committee, Vice President Mr. Sisana Sisane, Minister of Information and Tourism. Mr. Outama Choulamani, General Secretary of the Committee, for

Mr. Kamal Bahaa El-Din speeking to hospital staff in Vientiane

a farewell dinner party the night before departure. Present were other leading persons including the Governor of Vientiane Mr. Phao Phimphachanh. During toasts proposed by hosts, high appreciation and warm remarks were made for AAPSO delegation which were reciprocated equally full of gratitude for such a kind hospitality.

FOUR DAYS IN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

From Vientiene, the AAPSO delegation reached Hanoi on 27th March and stayed till 31st March.

Exhibition on Angola :

On the very first day after its arrival the delegation were shown round a neatly organised Exhibition on Angolan struggle for liberation. It was a pleasant surprise to see large exhibits displayed about the AAPSO Sponsored International Conference in Luanda (Feb. 4, 1976). The entire exhibition was a vivid testimony of the Vietnamese people's earnestness in combining the national and the international tasks of revolution.

Meeting with DRV Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee :

In the evening the delegation was received by the Solidarity Committee in its office chaired by the Acting Minister for Education. Warmly greeting the delegation, the Chairman gave a review of present developments in Vietnam, the preparations for general elections on 25 April and the unification of Vietnam. Finally he gave a special description of educational and school building activities in the country as a priority task of construction.

Replying to the greetings, Mr. Paliwal heartily thanked the Chairman for the opportunity given to AAPSO delegation, primarily to congratulate the heroic people of Vietnam for achieving peaceful unification and total liberation. He then explained additional purpose of the mission as follows

AAPSO delegation visiting an exhibition on Angola

Angola Exhibition

i) Foundation of the Solidarity School for Vietnamese children and

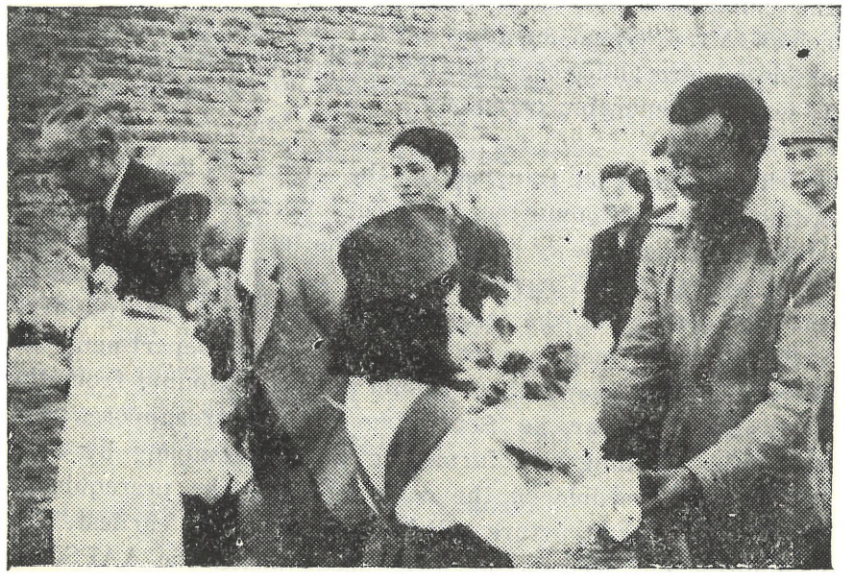
ii) The possibility of holding an International Seminar on Non-Alignment, Solidarity and Socialism Common Struggle and Cooperation.

Foundation of the Solidarity School :

On 23 March the AAPSO delegation participated in a delightful ceremony at the site of the school to be built by AAPSO contribution. First we were received by the Administration Committee at HA DONG — capital of HA-SON-BINH province. It is some 11 kilometers from Hanoi The site for the Solidarity School was specially chosen by the late Education Minister who belonged to this region. At the actual spot called TAY NINH, nearly a hundred pretty smiling children greeted the delegation with flowers lining on both sides of the path. This village TAY NINH has a natural pond near the site of the school adding to its scene beauty. At the moment there is only one floor small school on one side, which is quite insufficient for the increasing number of school going children. They propose therefore the new Solidarity School to have a three-storey building with 24 class rooms, plus six additional rooms. The delegation had the honour to lay the foundation bricks for the proposed Afro-Asian Solidarity School under a colourful banner and a poster published by the AAPSO which read

Hand in Hand to Build a School
for the Children of Vietnam.

For the delegation members it was a solemn and historic moment when they put solid bricks in the name of AAPSO dedicated to the new generation of Vietnam. They felt proud and delighted in front of the flowery smiling children of Vietnam. AAPSO had shown, it can and it will honour its pledges to the heroic people of Vietnam. They planted three trees in front of the school which will bloom and blossom along with the joyful growth of their young companions —



AAPSO delegation welcomed by school children in Vietnam

AAPSO delegation Planting a tree infront of Solidarity School

the children of this school. Addressing the teachers of the school Mr. Paliwal equated them as gardners who make children more and more beautiful physically and intellectually. It was a memorable ceremony.

The delegation returned to the office of the Ha Dong Administrative Committee to discuss details about the construction time-table of the school. The letter from the Secretary-General Mr. Youssef El Sebai was highly appreciated informing them of the initial contribution and the follow-up promise. The members of the Education Department informed that the new school should start functioning from the next academic year, i.e. September 1977. It presupposes that the entire building and furnishing will be complete by June 1977. It is possible on the condition that the prerequisites for the building structure will be shipped at the earliest. The Committee has written down all needs which the AAPSO is requested to fulfil without any delay. AAPSO is also requested to help constructing a swimming pool (the natural pond can be turned into a beautiful swimming pool for children). It will really be a pleasant coincidence that the AAPSO will be celebrating its 20th Anniversary when the Afro-Asian Solidarity School will have its opening ceremony.

Visits to Cooperative Farm and a Silk Weaving Centre :

As a glimpse of new life of Vietnam higher yields of production both in agriculture and industrial sector, the delegation visited a cooperative farm at Mo Lao village and a silk weaving factory at Van Phuc village. Small children of a kindergarten sang and danced in honour of the delegation. The Director of the Cooperative explained the continuous growth in production. The village is famous and historic for the fact that during national resistance against French colonialism, President Ho Chi Minh lived and directed national uprising from a house in this village. The house which is now a museum cherishes the memory of President Ho Chi Minh's residence and possesses many articles used by him.

In Hanoi the delegation had the opportunity to visit (late

President) Ho Chi Minh Memorial where it placed floral wreaths as a mark of deep respect to the great leader.

At the Military Museum in Hanoi it saw pictorial history of the heroic people of Vietnam depicting the defeat of French colonialism, the great battle of Dien Bien Phu and then the epic liberation war against U.S. aggression — both led by immortal leader Ho Chi Minh. It is an inspiring and vivid description through charts, pictures and wreakage of U.S. planes and weapons. As a result of the heroic resistance, courage and determination, the Vietnamese people both in North and South rose in complete unity and routed the foreign aggressors. What one sees today is a unified Vietnam whose people are fearless, joyful and optimist after passing through the long fire of aggression which they liquidated.

Meetings with State and Party Leaders :

Madam Nguyen Thi Binh, Foreign Minister of South Vietnam, came to Hanoi on 29th March and invited the delegation for a dinner with her. There was a cordial exchange of views at the Permanent Mission of South Vietnam in Hanoi prior to dinner. The suggestion of convening an International Seminar on Non-Alignment, preferably in Ho Chi Minh City, was put before her. The delegation wanted her guidance and assistance as a member of the AAPSO Presidium. She gave a detailed account of the present situation in South Vietnam which had a long record of neo-colonialist exploitation and reactionary regime till recently Saigon was liberated. Consequently the gap between the North and the South will take time to be filled. US secret agents still harbour sabotage and incite reaction. She was happy to see the AAPSO delegation coming to see for themselves the historic changes undergoing in Vietnam. The struggle against neo-colonialist intrigues is not yet over, she confided, but added that Vietnamese people are confident to overcome all difficulties in due course.

As regards the Seminar she gave her opinion that only the new Governement after election can decide and that will take time. Then we suggested an AAPSO event to be organised

in Vietnam round the 20th Anniversary which will also coincide with the opening ceremony of the Solidarity School. This proposal was welcomed by Madam Binh who said that it may be possible. Even for the Seminar she considered it an honour and acceptable in principle. Only the time factor did not suit.

Next morning the delegation had the opportunity to meet Com. XUAN THUY Head of the Foreign Relations Department of the Vietnam Workers Party. He is Member Central Committee and Secretary of the Party. At the Four Party Paris Peace Talks he was the chief of the DRV negotiating team. The delegation's meeting with him was highly rewarding and inspiring. He said that "your arrival in Hanoi coincides with a historic moment when the whole nation after more than thirty years prepares for general elections". The nation is jubilant with the eventual unification which will be completed by the elections on 25 April. The North already a socialist economy will help overcome the gap of the South. There are problems of reconstruction of quite a magnitude but just as the Vietnam Workers Party led the nation against imperialist aggressors, so also it will defeat and overcome obstacles in the way of building a new unified Vietnam. We have routed both French and US imperialists. We value highly international solidarity and support from friendly socialist countries, non-aligned countries and progressive forces from all over the world.

Thanking for his warm words, Mr. Paliwal assured the people and Government of Vietnam that AAPSO has always stood with them and will always remain so in their period of national rehabilitation and reconstruction. The construction of the Afro-Asian Solidarity School near Hanoi is a gesture of our love, admiration and solidarity with the people of Vietnam. The delegation told Com. XUAN THUY of the forthcoming 20th Anniversary of AAPSO coinciding the opening of the Solidarity School at the end of 1977 and proposed to hold an AAPSO international event to celebrate the 20th Anniversary. He felt happy on the suggestion and said they

will positively consider the matter and inform AAPSO later about it.

Press Conference in Hanoi :

In the afternoon of 30th March the D.R.V. Solidarity Committee organised a Press Conference to meet the AAPSO delegation. There were also present representatives of different mass organisations.

After a short welcome and interoduction by the Secretary of the Committee Com. Le Duy Van, AAPSO delegation gave its statement about the goodwill mission and its activities. It was followed by questions and answers which were related to AAPSO programme and activities, on support to liberation struggles in Africa, fight against racialism and apartheid, support to FRETILIN in Timor, liquidation of SEATO and other imperialist bases in Asia and Pacific, Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, struggle for development, support to PLO and the problem in Lebanon.

Questions on Asia, Pacific, imperialist military bases and on economic development were answered by Paliwal. On Angola and Africa in general by Miguel Neto, and on Palestine, Lebanon and in general on Middle East by Kamal Bahaa El Din.

It was quite an interesting and lively Press Conference.

Farewell dinner by DRV Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee :

The same night the DRV Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee headed by its Chairman who is at present the Acting Education Minister of Democratic Republic of Vietnam, gave a farewell dinner in honour of the visiting AAPSO delegation. It was an opportunity for a final round of talks and exchanged warm greetings and thanks. The visit to Vietnam was like a study in the school of revolutionary processes.

The delegation left Hanoi on the morning of 31st March.

Recommendations of the delegation :

1) To take immediate steps for the shipping of building material for the Solidarity School in Vietnam to be followed by material for furnishing it.

2) To request one of the socialist countries through its Solidarity Committees to construct a swimming pool near the school given by AAPSO to the children of Vietnam.

3) To prepare for the opening ceremony of the Solidarity School coinciding with an International event in Hanoi in celebration of the 20th Anniversary of AAPSO foundation next year (round about September 1977).

4) To publish a short history of the national liberation struggle of Laos covering the period up to the birth of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos.

Press Release

ON THE VICTORY OF THE STRUGGLE OF PEOPLE OF CAMBODIA

22 April 1975

After five years of grim struggle, full of sacrifices, but also of glorious victories against the aggressive war of the American imperialists and their stooges, the Cambodian people ultimately achieved final victory, liberating the capital Pnom Penh on April 17, 1975.

All the people of Cambodia received with enthusiasm the establishment of the revolutionary power in Cambodia and in Pnom Penh under the direction of FUNK... and GRUNK.

This victory underlines once more the importance of the role played by the peoples to confront agression and to defeat it. The agents of imperialism were destroyed over the rock of popular resistance and they fled before the popular flux.

Following a long struggle, there came the moment when Cambodia is able to lead the life of a free independent and non-aligned country, and to make part of the family of militant African and Asian peoples.

This great victory of the Cambodian people is also the victory of progressive peoples the world over, notably the peoples of the Third World, and it is a big encouragement for all the peoples struggling against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, particularly in the Afro-Asian countries.

The AAPSO has several times raised its voice in the past strongly condemning before World opinion, the agression of American imperialists, and firmly supporting the just cause

of the Cambodian people for national safety. Today, in these times of glory, the AAPSO ardently rejoices in, and warmly acclaims the outstanding victories of the Cambodian people and considers them its own.

The AAPSO fully supports the political line adopted, internationally and externally, by the 2nd National Congress of Cambodia held on February 24-25, 1975; for at the interior, the FUNK and the GRUNK are taking the destiny of the country in their hands and adhering to the policy of the larger unity of the whole nation and all the people regardless of the past of each individual with the exception of the seven traitors; abroad, the FUNK and the GRUNK practice a neutral and non-aligned policy; they establish relations with all near or far-away countries regardless of the political and social systems provided these countries honour the principles of equality, mutual respect and reciprocal interests as well as of non-agression and non-interference in the internal affairs of others.

The AAPSO appeals to peace-loving and progressive peoples over the world, notably, the Afro-Asian peoples, to give their moral, political and material assistance to the Cambodian people in their effort to reconstruct an independent, sovereign, peaceful, neutral, non-aligned, democratic and prosperous Cambodia.

YOUSSEF EL-SEBAI
Secretary General

Press Release

ON THE TOTAL LIBERATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM

30 April 1975

On this happy occasion the AAPSO sends its warmest greetings and hearty felicitations to the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam and to the entire Vietnamese people.

Today the peoples of Asia and Africa, Latin America, all the Socialist countries and the progressive forces of other continents including those in USA share the pride and joy of the Vietnamese people.

While the people of Vietnam have been in the front rank of the fighters against the dark forces of world imperialism, the peoples and governments of socialist countries gave them the best possible assistance in all forms. The people of Vietnam had also the full support of non-aligned countries and the anti-imperialist progressive peoples in the western world including those of USA. Therefore the entire peace-loving humanity whose international solidarity gave strength to Vietnamese people, consider it a common victory of all freedom loving mankind.

Throughout their struggle for liberation, first against the French and then against the US imperialism, Vietnamese people led by President Ho Chi Minh had inspired and encouraged the national liberation struggles in Asia, Africa, Middle East and other regions wherever oppressed people fought for their legitimate rights. The people of Vietnam defended the frontiers of freedom for all by their perseverance and death defying courage decade after decade.

And today by their complete victory they have electrified the entire atmosphere full of hope and confidence to all free-

dom fighters whether they are in Namibia, Zimbabwe, South Africa or they are in Israeli occupied Arab lands. The impact of Vietnam has been truly historic, second only to the victory over fascism at the end of the Second World War. This era marked the beginning of a new stage of the liberation struggles of the peoples of Asia and Africa, which, through their struggle and through the support rendered by all the progressive and socialist forces, in particular the support of the Soviet Union, have been able to gain independence and freedom.

The Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation has been consistently supporting the Vietnamese people throughout its struggle for liberation. AAPSO has always considered the liberation struggle in Indochina as the most important issue of solidarity movement, because it has been the testing ground of US neo-colonialism. Today we rejoice with the Vietnamese people and all other countries of Indochina, who have dealt a serious blow to the chieftain of world imperialism and thus accelerated the whole world process of liberation of mankind everywhere.

But in this hour of joy and pride, let us not forget the legacy of aggressors who have left millions of people homeless, breadless and as orphans. The wounds of war in Vietnam will take time to heal. AAPSO appeals to all national units of solidarity organisations, all national and international democratic organisations, peoples and governments in all the continents to send immediate relief in the form of material aid-money, medicines, cloths, etc. necessary for the people in the recently liberated areas.

The fight against imperialism is not yet over. Though the imperialist tiger has been badly wounded, it had not changed its character. There are still areas in Southern Africa, Middle East, S. Korea, Chile and other regions where peoples are engaged in bitter fight against the same common enemy. In order to continue its plunder of the natural resources of the third world nations, neo-colonialism sets up new network

of military bases as in the Indian Oceans. Its existing bases in South East Asian nations are disintegrating as a result of the blows given by the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The peoples of Japan, Korea, Thailand, and Philippines are demanding withdrawal of US military troops and bases. But the wounded tiger has not yet abandoned its plans of plundering the wealth of these regions.

At this new phase of Afro-Asian peoples struggles against the forces of imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racialism and Zionism, which may be called post-Vietnam era, opened by the great victories of the Vietnamese people, AAPSO considers it a necessity to be vigilant and united to confront the new challenges.

There is still a long way to achieve economic emancipation from the strangulating policies of neo-colonialism as well as there are several remaining pockets of colonialism where even political freedom has not been won so far. But with the glorious path shown by the brave Vietnamese people we are ever more confident that the day is not far off when all peoples and all nations without exception will breathe the air of freedom.

YOUSSEF EL-SEBAI
Secretary General

Extracts from the resolution of the Third Session of the AAPSO Presidium 19-20 January 1976 Aden — P.D.R.Y.

The Presidium hails the emergence of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos and the endorsement of the new democratic constitution of the Cambodian government as well as the current process of unification of the two parts of Vietnam. These have become vital factors of peace in Asia.

A new position has emerged in Asia consolidating the posts of peace and non-alignment as well as reinforcing collective security there.

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